

position, and do you have a larger measure of those virtues and qualities which you so much admired in those about whom you read? Are *you* now more helpful, more self-sacrificing? If not, then you have read that book to no purpose except to your own condemnation. Unless the world is made better by the knowledge you have gathered then you have been gaining knowledge in vain. You have been reading your Bible. To what purpose? Are you stronger in faith, purer and richer in love, better qualified for the duties and responsibilities of life? Have you a higher sense of right and wrong, deeper convictions, a keener sense of sin and its exceeding sinfulness? Have you been brought into closer fellowship with the Spirit, more intimate relations with the Father in heaven? Have you been inspired by your reading to tell the sweet story of Christ's love to those who know it not? Ask yourself these questions, and the answer to them will determine to what purpose you have been reading. To seek knowledge for the mere pleasure of its possession is no worthier motive, and no more to be commended, than the accumulation of wealth for no other purpose but the temporary, tho imaginary, pleasure it affords the possessor.

Concentration of Effort

This is an age of specialists. No one man becomes efficient in everything. The physician of international reputation makes a single disease the study of a life time. He concentrates all the powers of mind, body and spirit upon one thing. And in that one thing he succeeds. Life is too short to divide one's efforts. One man may be a great and successful railroad president or president of a large life insurance company which owes its success to many weary hours of toil and sacrifice, but one man can not be both. Our colleges and educational institutions seek specialists, men who have mastered *one thing*, and mastered it thoroughly. This was the secret of Paul's success: "This one thing I do." That one thing he did, did it successfully, and today, after nineteen centuries of the Christian era, during which time the church has produced many great and mighty men, Paul yet stands out in lonely grandeur, declared to be the most magnificent character in history. He had one object in life, and to that he bent all his efforts. The secret of all success, whether in the realm of the physical, the intellectual or the spiritual, is *concentration*. Whoever ignores this truth will meet with disaster and failure. Our present war with Spain is a striking example of what can be done by concentration of effort. Suppose the United States had turned its guns on Havana, Santiago and the Island of Porto Rico at one and the same time. Her scattered forces would have been repulsed by the strongly entrenched enemy. But "Uncle Sam" is a better philosopher than that. First it was

the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay; next Cervera in Santiago Bay; next the Spanish army in and about the city of Santiago; now he moves quietly on to Porto Rico, and the truth is before his united forces the enemy goes down like a dry fence before a raging fire. When Dewy met the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, in the midst of the fire one of the enemy's vessels came boldly toward Admiral Dewy's flagship, evidently intending to destroy it. At the command of the Admiral every gun in the fleet was turned upon it and in a few minutes it was at the bottom of the sea. That is the only way to sink the strongholds of sin, and float the flag of truth over their ruins.

Let the church learn and apply this lesson of concentration. Let us apply this lesson to all the various interests of the church, and in our weakness not attempt more than we are able to accomplish. In our judgment nothing new should be undertaken by the coming conference. We already have weighty matters on our hands, and to add to what we have already undertaken would be but to divide our forces. Let us remember that the work of the Christian church is two-fold, it is destructive and constructive. The former is the easier. It is right here where the United States is experiencing its greatest difficulties. It can demolish Spanish vessels and forts and capture whole armies, it can drive the enemy out of Cuba, but then comes the weightier matter of construction or reconstruction, the establishment of a better government. The church has more to do than turn its battering rams of truth against the strongholds and principalities of Satan. There must be *construction* as well as *destruction*. But to be more definite let us note what we have before us at our conference. Three things: Education, Literature and Missions. How shall we deal with them? It will be agreed by all that they are of great importance and must be dealt with wisely.

First, Ashland College has reached a point in its history when the church should unite all its efforts to make it the one great educational institution of the brotherhood. The debt has been cancelled. The church has come to the rescue, paid its money, and now the institution is free from all indebtedness. It is *now*, if ever, that our efforts will yield lasting results. On this question the church can not afford to be divided. The Board of Trustees will present a plan for the consideration of the conference which in our judgment should have the unanimous support of that body, and which if adopted and carried out, will put the school on a basis for the most successful work, and this done the most gratifying results will follow. The feasibility of the plan is not likely to be questioned. Here is the one educational institution of the church. Let the entire brotherhood join hearts and hands in its support. Let

us *unitedly* stand by the institution, let us *try* this for a year, and when in 1899 we again meet in conference, the church will witness an enthusiasm in behalf of the college and higher education, and an influence going out from the educational center of the brotherhood that will prove an inspiration and an uplift to the entire membership. Let this be the year when the educational interests of the church will make a new era in its history.

Second. Another interest or enterprise upon which the church must unite her efforts is the Publishing House. It seems to be the opinion of the church that its publishing interests must succeed without any financial support except what accrues from the sale of its publications? If the Publishing House succeeds without such assistance it will be more fortunate than the publishing houses of other denominations have been. A year ago the Unitarian church found its Publishing House in a weak, sickly condition, and as a consequence the denomination on the decline. The church at once raised \$20,000 for the permanent establishment of its publishing interests, and the investment was a wise and good one. But if the Publishing House of the Brethren church is to succeed without any financial support except what accrues from sales of its publications, then it should at least have the united support of the church. We say it frankly, but not complainingly, that the EVANGELIST does not have the support it should have. Perhaps it does not deserve any better. If not, then it becomes this conference to place some one at its head that will make it deserving, and to do that the person who is put there should have the income from a 160 acre farm, besides the income of the paper. At present the church pays (agrees to pay) one man to manage its finances, edit the EVANGELIST, prepare all the matter for two grades of Sunday-school quarterlies, do the clerical work, get out two weekly Sunday-school papers, etc., etc. In the columns of the EVANGELIST should appear contributions from the ablest men in the church. Financially it should have the support of every member of the church, and will have if interested in the cause the church represents. Let the conference take the matter in hand and urge upon all pastors and agents to make one united effort to reach a subscription list of 3,000 before January 1899 closes. This done the work will move grandly forward and the results will surprise the church. Let the next ecclesiastical year see the subscription list to the EVANGELIST speedily rise to 3,000.

Third, we mention our missions. That the church should engage in missionary work is not a question. Here too our efforts have not been as fruitful as we could wish, probably they were too much divided. Let the church now unite her efforts upon something definite and never cease until it is accom-